

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

WLK 79-175

August 22, 1961

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

The following is an extremely condensed statement of ^{First Thoughts} ~~recommendations~~ regarding some aspects of our Cuba policy.

The Conference at Punta del Este adds, I believe, two new factors to our consideration of Cuba policy.

First, is the conversation with Che Guevara which is appended to this paper. I believe this conversation -- coupled with other evidence which has been accumulating -- indicates that Cuba is undergoing severe economic stress, that the Soviet Union is not prepared to undertake the large effort necessary to get them on their feet (a Brazilian told me "you don't feed the lamb in the mouth of the lion"), and that Cuba desires an understanding with the U.S.; It is worth remembering that Guevara undoubtedly represents the most dedicated communist views of the Cuban government -- and if there is room for any spectrum of viewpoint in Cuba there may be other Cuban leaders even more anxious for an accommodation within the U.S. This is only a speculative possibility but it is, I believe, a reasonable speculation.

Second, is the emerging fact that any hope for OAS action -- along the lines of the Colombian initiative -- is dead. It is my strong belief that the big countries (Brazil and Mexico especially) are not prepared to buy this, that they feel such action would be a meaningless gesture at great internal political cost to them, and that there is no point on going ahead without the support of the large countries. A numerical majority -- led by Nicaragua and Peru -- would not be in our interest.

This being so I believe we should consider the following general lines of action.

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U.S. ARCHIVIST (WLK-79-175)
BY WAM NARS, DATE 4/15/81

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(A) Pay little public attention to Cuba. Do not allow them to appear as the victims of U.S. aggression. Do not create the impression we are obsessed with Castro -- an impression which only strengthens Castro's hand in Cuba and encourages anti-American and leftist forces in other countries to rally round the Cuban flag.

(B) Quietly intensify, wherever possible, the economic pressure. This means selectively discouraging those doing business with Castro,

invoking the Trading with the Enemy Act upon the first apparent provocation, and focussing some expert attention on the problem of economic warfare.

(D) Step up propaganda aimed at:

1. Telling the Cuban people how their government is sacrificing their welfare to international communism.

2. Widely publicizing the economic failures of the Castro regime throughout Latin America.

(E) Form the Caribbean Security pact strictly as a defensive measure. Aside from the substantive value of such an organization in dealing with the spread of revolution, it will have an adverse impact on the psychology of peaceful coexistence which Castro is now trying to create.

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(F) Seek some way of continuing the below ground dialogue which Che has begun. We can thus make it clear that we want to help Cuba and would help Cuba if it would sever communist ties and begin democratization. In this way we can begin to probe for the split in top leadership which might exist.

Dick

Dick Goodwin